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631 Gulf of 'Oman established by the Middle East Anti-Locust Unit in 1943. Besides Trucial sheikhs and their immediate subjects, there are Bedouins, who, however, do not engage in any activity on the seas and are thus outside the provisions of the treaties. In general, the Bedouins recognize the authority of one or another of the Trucial sheikhs, but changes of allegiance are numerous. Bedouins may decide to make wars of their own, or to change sides during wars between Trucial sheikhs, which makes the political position even more complex. In recent years Bedouins have frequently attacked the motor convoys of British nationals traveling in the definite territory of peaceful sheikhs,¹⁰ but under the provisions of the treaties there seems to be no legal remedy to stop this armed aggression, except through successful local wars by the sheikhs.

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177 As a result of the nature of the treaties, the culture of the area, containing both Arab and Iranian elements, has been preserved practically free of any foreign admixture. Dr. A. R. Lindt,¹¹ a Swiss observer writing in 1939, was particularly impressed by this achievement. Slowly, however, twentieth-century influences have begun to appear. In the early 1930's Great Britain, in the course of a quarrel over oil concessions in Iran, relocated its air routes to India over Trucial 'Oman instead of Iran. Rights to land seaplanes at Dibai and landplanes at Sharjah were acquired, and maintenance crews and other personnel were permanently stationed there. To ensure safety during local wars, overnight quarters for passengers, with permanent armed guards, were established in a fortified compound near Sharjah. Landing fees, levied according to the number of passengers, were payable to the sheikhs in whose territory landings took place. These landing fees constituted a large part of the revenues of the sheikh of Sharjah, whose only other income is derived from a tax on pearling, which is hard to collect.¹² During the war, rights to make emergency landings on the island of Yas were also acquired by the British government. Today, larger planes can fly directly from Bahrein to Karachi, and little use is made of the landing rights on the Trucial Coast, so that the sheikhs' revenues must have decreased substantially. The introduction of the motorcar has also had a marked effect on the local economy. Traffic from inland oases and the Gulf of 'Oman to the cities on the shores of the Persian Gulf is important, though no statistical data are available.

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494 The presence of oil had been suspected since the beginning of the century, but the inaccessibility of the region together with its uncertain political status

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471 ¹⁰ O'Shea, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹¹ Politics in the Persian Gulf, *Journ. Royal Central Asian Soc.*, Vol. 26, 1939, pp. 619-633.

¹² O'Shea, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 and 140.

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TABLE II—CONCESSIONS FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES
IN THE SOUTHWESTERN PERSIAN GULF REGION

STATE	CONCESSIONAIRE	DATE	TERM	DEVELOPMENT	REMARKS
QATAR	1. For territory of state: Petroleum Development (Qatar) Ltd., subsidiary of Iraq Petroleum Co.	1935	75 years	Production since 1949; reached in March, 1953, 68,000 barrels a day (March, 1951, 46,500; March, 1950, 34,000; March, 1949, nil).	By arbitration, the concession is to include resources under the sea within the three-mile limit.
	2. For subsurface offshore rights beyond the three-mile limit: Superior Oil Co. of San Francisco, Calif., jointly with Central Mining and Investment Corporation of London, England; concession abandoned and transferred to the Royal Dutch Shell Co., 1952.	1949	Not available		Ditto outside three-mile limit.
ABU DHABI	1. For territory of sheikhdom: Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd., subsidiary of Iraq Petroleum Co.	1939	75 years	Exploration begun in 1950.	Arbitration award as above, 1.
	2. For subsurface offshore rights: Superior Oil Co. of San Francisco, Calif.; concession abandoned, 1952.	1949	Not available		Arbitration award as above, 2.
OTHER TRUCIAL STATES	Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd.	No details available			
'OMAN	Petroleum Development ('Oman and Dhofar) Ltd., subsidiary of Iraq Petroleum Co.	No details available			
SAUDI ARABIA (part adjoining Trucial 'Oman)	Arabian American Oil Co.	1933	66 years	Exploration begun.	
ADEN PROTECTORATE	Petroleum Concessions Ltd., subsidiary of Iraq Petroleum Co.	No details available			

T seems to have discouraged plans for development. However, in 1935 the 135 sheikh of Qatar signed a concession agreement, and in 1939 the sheikhs of the 648 Trucial Coast followed (Table II). All the concessions were assigned to 471 subsidiaries of the Iraq Petroleum Company in which British, American, Dutch, French, and private interests participate. Until now commercial 9 production of oil has taken place only in Qatar; development in Trucial 135 'Oman is still in the early exploratory stage. The oil at Qatar is obtained at 471 about 6000 feet from a Jurassic limestone rock reservoir in a long, narrow 648 anticline. It is believed that either these strata or the thick, highly productive [315] Cretaceous sandstone series of Kuwait extend to Trucial 'Oman.

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in the towns along the coast. A further basis of the Iranian claim is the high proportion of the trade of the region that appears to flow to and from Iran, and is in the hands of Iranian traders, many of whom have migrated to the coast in the last 25 years. In 1951 discussions were reported to have begun between Great Britain and Saudi Arabia regarding the boundaries between the various British protectorates and Saudi Arabia, but at the time of this writing (late 1952) no conclusions have been announced.

Despite these political uncertainties and the resulting absence of civil authority, test wells are being drilled in Trucial 'Oman. Two in the sheikhdom of Dibai (at Jebel Ali and Ras Sedr) have been abandoned at a depth of 12,000 feet. A third well, in the sheikhdom of Abu Dhabi, is now planned, 12 miles inland from Tarif. Because of the shallow waters off Tarif, drilling equipment and other supplies will have to be discharged at Zubaya, 65 miles distant. As in Qatar, considerable local construction will be necessary before any commercial production of oil can be undertaken.

Since President Truman's claim in 1945 to United States jurisdiction over the resources located underneath the shallow seas of the continental shelf off the United States, no fewer than eleven states in the Persian Gulf area have asserted similar, if not more sweeping, rights, in spite of the absence of many boundaries on land.²⁰ Probably most of these claims contradict one another. So far, oil has been struck at only one point offshore in the Persian Gulf, in the extreme northwest part, effectively claimed by Saudi Arabia. However, even before this discovery the sheikhs of Qatar and Abu Dhabi, independently of each other, had granted concessions to their proclaimed offshore resources to another company, which is not a partner in the Saudi Arabian oil concession or in the Iraq Petroleum Company. In both cases the subsidiaries of this company holding the oil concessions from Qatar and from the sheikhdoms of Trucial 'Oman complained that these offshore concessions infringed on their rights, which they maintained included all resources under the jurisdiction of the sheikhs. Both disputes were arbitrated under the terms of the concession agreements. In 1950 the arbitrator in the case of Qatar, Lord Radcliffe, distinguished between the territory of Qatar, which includes the sea and subsurface resources up to the three-mile limit, and other rights of Qatar in the open sea beyond the three-mile limit. Throughout the territory of Qatar as defined by the arbitrator the concession of the Iraq Petroleum Company's subsidiary is valid; elsewhere, wherever

²⁰ S. W. Boggs: National Claims in Adjacent Seas, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 41, 1951, pp. 185-209, summarizes the complicated situation before arbitration.

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THE GEOGRAPHICAL ISSUE

131 Qatar has rights under the sea, the concession holds.²⁷ In a somewhat different
 471 context the concessions of Abu Dhabi were similarly defined by the arbitra-
 131 tor, Lord Asquith, in 1951.²⁸ Neither of the arbitrations, however, touched
 471 on the states' boundaries in or under the Persian Gulf, which therefore re-
 main open to dispute.²⁹ It is now possible that, in view of the action of the
 United Nations proposed by the International Law Commission,³⁰ rights to
 resources underneath shallow seas will be defined according to technological
 criteria of exploitation rather than geographical proximity. Should the
 United Nations act speedily on this proposal, the evolution of the maritime
 status of the Trucial sheikhdoms may continue to precede the establishment
 of political order on land.

²⁷ In 1952 the nonterritorial concession was surrendered by the concessionaire. It was subsequently acquired by the Royal Dutch Shell, which is a partner in the Iraq Petroleum Company.

²⁸ In 1952 the nonterritorial concession was abandoned by the concessionaire.

²⁹ Several petroleum trade journals have given the area of the Qatar nonterritorial concession as 10,300 square miles. This measurement would indicate definite boundaries in the Persian Gulf; however, no authority for such boundaries appears to be available.

³⁰ United Nations, Report of the International Law Commission, General Assembly, Official Records, Sixth Session, Supplement No. 9 (A/1858), New York, 1951, pp. 26 ff.

THE SAND KINGS OF OMAN

771 to the majority of professing Christians. If an easy acceptance of
 181 poor and insanitary living conditions is one of the major faults of
 this race, as I believe it is, then such a shortcoming is easily counter-
 balanced by their innumerable virtues, which are seldom found in
 practice amongst Englishmen.

000 I have not had the opportunity to make a deep study of social
 problems in Arabia, but from my interpretation of what I have
 seen, I should not hesitate to lay the blame for the vices and back-
 wardness of Arab life on the system of government which obtains
 in most regions. In principle it is comparable with the feudal
 361 system in Europe. Apart from the Bedouin country, where life
 is migratory and the tribes are tent-dwellers, the majority of Arabs
 are concentrated in the fertile valleys, where they can obtain water
 622 for their livestock and crops. In Oman, as in other parts of the
 continent, the coastal areas are ruled by paramount sheikhs, whose
 power is absolute and who are sometimes elected by their subjects,
 but who are more generally appointed by succession, the kingdom
 thus remaining in the hands of one family. Although many of
 these princely families are quite ancient, and have provided rulers
 for different sheikhdoms for centuries, it is not unusual to find one
 sheikh deposing another by force. Jealousy and a greed for more
 territory and power are frequently the root cause of tribal wars.

There is little that is democratic in the government of a sheikh-
 692 dom. Through his judges and ministers, who are paid out of the
 royal purse, the sheikh administers justice. Often it is the justice
 of a tyrant, although some sheikhs are just and kindly and are
 regarded by their subjects more as 'fathers of the people' than as
 651 kings. All land belongs to the sheikh, who is theoretically
 471 custodian for his tribe, and he exacts revenues from merchants,
 shopkeepers, fishermen, pearling-fleet owners and merchants,
 camel breeders and farmers, in the form of a commission on all
 business, in addition to heavy taxes on the inhabitants of the towns
 and villages. There are, too, taxes on land and property, on fishing
 and pearling rights, and profits are even obtained from the sale
 [567] (illegal and contrary to the treaties with the British Government,
 but still indulged in) of slave labour.

651 Apart from the pearling industry, one of the richest sources of
 income in Arabia is from the date plantations, and these, if not
 actually owned by the sheikhs, at least provide him with a handsome
 additional income. In recent years the Arab rulers have been con-
 siderably enriched by large sums paid for concessions by the oil

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006 and pointed out that if we were based there we should have no need of motor-cars. The Khan Sahib tactfully hedged him off this subject, since he realized that I had no desire to commit myself to any statement which the sheikh might construe as an official decision.

622 We were on safe ground when we asked him² about the date
 • [471] plantations, for the sheikh is one of the largest plantation owners
 245 in Oman, and a considerable part of his income is derived from the
 439 sale of dates. It appeared that the crop was doing excellently this year, but, owing to the war and the shortage of transport, the demand from foreign countries had dropped considerably. He was, therefore, exporting greater quantities to India and Egypt, although a fair amount was being shipped to South Africa and America. When we told him that people in England had seen very few dates during the war, and that the few which were on sale were rationed, he was very sympathetic. He knew little about
 [262] English food and, being an Arab, could scarcely imagine how a household could exist without dates.

578 Praise Allah, he said, they had experienced no drought or plague of insects this year, but they had suffered from raids from the hills. The cursed Shi'hou tribesmen (might they die of plague in their filthy caves!) had been attacking and robbing his labourers, so that they were afraid to enter the plantations except in groups, and he had been obliged to employ armed guards to keep them off. That very morning, he explained, he intended to hold a conference of his nobles to plan a campaign of defence against these marauders. He intended to drive them back into their mountains and inflict such heavy punishment that they would not venture into the plains again for many months. If only he had an aeroplane, he said wryly, he would know how to deal with the Shi'hou! 'Like you do in Afghanistan,' he added with a chuckle.

622 The sheikh, who was a fine-looking old man with a patriarchal, weather-beaten face, had a reputation for being one of the most fearless fighters in Oman, and his feud with Sharjah of ten years ago was still talked about in the desert. Hanging on the wall was a long ceremonial sword, with a chased gold handle; it is said that he had swept off the heads of three men with its blade with a single sweep. He had a face of great power, a tight-lipped mouth, a large hooked nose, and keen grey eyes under shaggy eyebrows. Although few of us understood his language, we all fell under the spell of his strong personality. He was kindly and courteous, but
 [The Sheikh of Ras-al-Kaimah -- Analyst]

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000 Petroleum in the Middle East was not developed on a commercial scale until the twentieth century, culminating in that vast project of modern engineering, the construction and installation of the Haifa pipe-line. During the past ten years the industry has made rapid strides; pipe-lines have been laid throughout Iraq and part of Arabia; a city of pipes, girders and refineries has sprung up at Abadan, at the extreme northern point of the Persian Gulf, and thousands of drillers, engineers, prospectors, technicians and workmen have been employed in the oil fields by the great international oil companies. Geologists have mapped huge areas of desert and mountain on both sides of the Gulf, by air as well as on foot, and from their conclusions it is reasonable to believe that almost inexhaustible subterranean supplies of oil flow in lakes of varying depth from Mosul, straight down the Persian Gulf, and probably along the coast of southern Persia as far east as Baluchistan.

Until the internal combustion or jet propulsion engine is replaced by atomic energy, oil is likely to remain a major factor in world power politics, and the territories in which the principal deposits lie will be sought after by interested nations. Thus the future of Arabia, an important oil-producing country, may be utterly changed in the next fifty years by the needs of modern industry. So far, the American countries have confined their activities to Arabia proper and the island of Bahrain, which, our own experts stated, after drilling experiments, contained insufficient deposits to warrant exploitation; not long afterwards American drillers found oil a short distance out at sea, estimated to be of sufficient quantity to yield a million barrels a year, and obtained a concession to work it.

315 The same thing may happen in the Trucial Oman Coast,
 471 unless we are wide-awake enough to develop the resources of that region ourselves. A geologist employed by the Anglo-Persian Company assured me that large deposits of high-grade petroleum lie under the sands between Sharjah and Ras-al-Khaimah; American drillers who sank wells for water, but who by a remarkable coincidence found oil, have proved it. A number of British oil companies, who have joint financial interests, have obtained concessions from the Trucial sheikhs, and it is to be hoped that as soon as economic and other conditions allow, they will undertake drilling operations in this region.

000 The search for oil is going to change the face of Arabia, but if it results in modernizing the desert tribes and introducing the benefits of civilization to Oman and other backward regions, even

441 before them. Jam Shan senior, whose family has been engaged in the pearl business for more than a hundred years, told me amusing stories of his visits to Paris where he once had an office in the Rue de la Paix.

From an old iron safe he produced two coarse linen bags, tied with string and sealed with wax, and undid the string. One bag contained seed pearls of little value or beauty; the other bulged with hundreds of pearls of every shape and size—yellow, black, pink and moon-white. One, which he placed in the palm of my hand, was priced at £50. It was a perfect sphere, of a delicate rose-pink, lit with a hundred facets of light, soft and lustrous, like moonlight on a desert pool. Its incomparable sheen mirrored every movement and, on looking into its depths one could see hues of red and mauve. To match this pearl for a necklace Jam Shan told me, might take take him three years; but when it was complete it would be worth a fortune. There was none other like it in the collection, although there were hundreds with delicate hues and lustres, from pale silvery pink to yellow-gold.

[51] We declined the tea and rice cakes which were offered to us, and as Jam Shan bowed us out of the room he apologized for his poor collection and promised to show us some rarities the next time we called. It was ironical to think that a mere handful of those gleaming balls of nacre, manufactured by the oyster to cover an irritation, would keep a family in luxury and comfort for several years. The expenses of the average Arab household, in the poorer quarter, are about £50 a year—the value of a single pearl! And yet Mr. Jam Shan and others like him, who could find a million pounds with ease if they required it, live so simply themselves that £250 would probably cover their personal and household expenses per annum.

[471] Our next visit was to the home of Basil Lermite, of the Petroleum Concession. This house, which is situated on the waterfront, is one of the most imposing in Dubai. It is only two storeys high but has an enormous frontage and the verandas and ornamental Persian columns on the façade are richly painted in red and blue. Two armed, uniformed guards examined our credentials at the gateway, and then conducted us through the open courtyard to Mr. Lermite's quarters; the courtyard was a blaze of colour, bougainvillea and roses growing in profusion. There was a little marble fountain in the centre, and along the walls were peach, pomegranate and fig trees.

THE RUB-AL-KHALI

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Lermitte received us on the veranda. Tea was already laid 000 on a modern oak table that might have come from Heals; the china tea service was Spode, and the teapot and milk jug were of Georgian silver. They had been brought from England in the small motor yacht, moored in the creek, in which Lermitte travels all round the Gulf. He is a most remarkable character. When he entertains it is in the 'pukka' English fashion, with doilies, thin bread and butter and iced cakes, but when alone or in the desert, Lermitte is more Arabian than the Arabs themselves. He is probably more liked and respected than any foreigner in the Gulf; he speaks several Arabian dialects fluently, and has penetrated into inaccessible parts of the desert which no other travellers have visited. Yet he seldom speaks of his experiences, and has not written a line about them. I regret having to mention his name, for Lermitte (the name was originally L'Hermite, he tells me) hates publicity above all else, but a book on the Trucial Oman Coast would be incomplete if it did not refer to him.

In appearance he is the typical public school form master—neat, small, scholarly, with patrician features and an æsthetic air; a gentle man, with twinkling blue eyes and little of the 'strong man' about him. He will as soon talk about cricket or bridge as about the Arabs, whom he loves, for he is the perfect host. A Government official once told me that Lermitte knows more about the Omani tribes than any other Englishman, for he has lived with them in their tents and is treated by them as an equal. His influence with the sheikhs is tremendous, and I honestly believe that for his sake they would stop a tribal war if it interfered with his interests.

Lermitte has spent twenty years in Arabia and the Middle [47] East. His job consists in travelling all over south-eastern Arabia in search of oil concessions; when he has obtained these he had to visit each sheikh and headman periodically and pay them the concession fees. These sometimes amount to thousands of rupees, and Lermitte has to carry the money across the desert in cash. This entails the formation of a large caravan, for the money is contained in chests, bound to the backs of camels; a small army of armed guards accompanies the caravan, for Lermitte has been attacked by bandits in the past. On one occasion he was ambushed by Bedouins and taken prisoner, but his charm and knowledge of the language soon obtained his release, without recourse to outside help. That is the sort of man he is.

We were lucky to find him at his home in Dubai, for he is

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all the fun that he could out of desert life, yet he worked exceedingly
 000 hard and devoted several hours each day to the study of Arabic.

245 Tandy had been instructed to pay a visit to Djaidh to discuss
 491 with the tribal leaders the continuation of work on the wells which
 irrigate the large date plantations for which this district is famous.
 Djaidh, which is not a village but a district, lies about fifty miles
 east of Sharjah on the direct camel route, but the sand tracks are
 extremely soft for vehicular traffic and Tandy had chosen a
 circular route by way of Falaj-al-'Ali and Muraq-quibat, where the
 road is reasonably good and has a hard surface. It added twenty
 miles to the journey, but the extra comfort and ease of travel
 compensated for this.

622 I had been invited to join the party, since Captain Tandy had
 101 expectations of meeting Sheikh Mahommed bin Ali, ruler of the
 609 wild Beni Quitab tribe of Bedouins. I had often expressed a
 wish to see this chief, whose fierceness and bold character were
 celebrated in Oman; I never expected to have this privilege, for
 the Beni Quitab lived in remote and inaccessible parts of the desert,
 mostly at the foothills of the Jebel-al-Faiyah range, and were
 continually changing their camping-ground. It was reported,
 moreover, that they were hostile to foreigners and that Sheikh
 Mahommed had met only two Europeans, one of them being
 Sir Geoffrey Prior, the British Resident, who had difficulty in
 finding him. Arabs are very chary of giving information to
 foreigners concerning the whereabouts of Bedouin tribes, pre-
 sumably because they fear reprisals.

312 Owing to the waterless nature of Oman—which is, geographi-
 245 cally, merely a coastal extension of the Great Southern Desert, or
 [438] Rub-al-Khali—date plantations of any appreciable size are rare.
 On the Oman Gulf side of the peninsula, and at Muscat, they flourish
 to such an extent that their export forms one of the staple industries
 of this part of south-east Arabia, but west of the Shimailiyah the
 only large plantations are at Falaj-al-'Ali and Djaidh, where their
 [471] ownership is shared by the tribes in common. Djaidh is neutral
 territory, but the responsibility for managing the plantations is
 divided between the Sheikhs of Sharjah and Kalba; the Sheikh of
 Ras-al-Khaimah is responsible for the plantations at Falaj-al-'Ali,
 although the Sheikh of Umm-al-Quwain has some interest in
 this plantation. The district is inhabited by Kalba tribesmen, who
 live in encampments near the wells; they are responsible, through
 their headmen or sub-chiefs, for the maintenance of the irrigation

TABLE I—SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN TRUCIAL SHEIKHDOMS

TRUCIAL SHEIKHDOM	RECENT CHANGES
101 315 471 ABU DHABI	The largest Trucial sheikhdom, territorially better consolidated than before. Prospecting for oil proceeds on land; oil, of a better quality than the other Arabian oils, has been discovered at Murban (about 23° 50' N. and 53° 45' E.), but the full significance of the discovery has not yet been evaluated. A new oil concession, to last 65 years, for the offshore subsurface rights in the Persian Gulf, as defined in the 1951 arbitration award, was granted to a combination of British (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) and French companies in March, 1953; the area is described as exceeding 12,000 square miles (no information has been released to show how this figure was calculated); under the terms of the concession, exploration must begin within a year, and drilling within five years.
361 178 162 DIBAI	The town of Dibai is expanding rapidly; its population is now estimated at 38,000. Two commercial banks and a hospital have been established, and there are regular bimonthly mail-steamers connections with Iraq and India. In view of the growth of Dibai, the headquarters of the British Political Agent for Trucial 'Oman are being transferred there from Sharjah. An offshore concession described as covering 1300 square miles was granted in August, 1952, to the same group of companies that have obtained the Abu Dhabi offshore concession; the terms also are the same, except that the duration is limited to 60 years. Drilling to 12,000 feet has produced no oil so far.
[508] SHARJAH	Probably now the second largest of the Trucial sheikhdoms; includes the inland oasis of Dhaid and the town of Kalba, on the Gulf of 'Oman. The aerodrome near the town of Sharjah is served by three flights a week from Bahrain, the only regular air service to Trucial 'Oman.
AJMAN	No change.
UMM AL QAIWAIN	" "
RAS AL KHADMA	" "
FUJAIRA	Trucial sheikhdom since 1952; economically unimportant.

101 by the Sultan of Muscat and 'Oman. After some skirmishes between the troops of Saudi Arabia and British-officered Trucial 'Oman levies, a standstill agreement, similar to the 631 Palestine armistice agreements, was reached, which stabilized for the time being the 648 positions occupied by the various states and armies. Owing to the location of Hamasa between the other villages of the oasis, this standstill agreement has resulted in some form of blockade of the forces of Saudi Arabia there; Saudi Arabian efforts to supply Hamasa have led to further bloodshed and complaints to the United Nations. Since the oasis of Buraimi contains the only sizable wells in the eastern Rub' al Khali desert, possession of, and free access to, all or parts of it is important to anyone who desires to rule, and exploit the minerals of, the Empty Quarter of Arabia. Several suggestions for amicable settlement or arbitration of the dispute have been made, particularly by the new King of Saudi Arabia (*New York Times*, Nov. 11, 1953). In view of the importance of the oasis, definite boundaries between Saudi Arabia, Trucial 'Oman, the Sultanate of Muscat and 'Oman (in whose Dhofar region a group of American oil companies has a concession), and possibly Aden Protectorate may now be established, though the process of definition would take some time. All the oil companies operating in the states concerned have announced their agreement to any new boundaries that may be drawn.—ALEXANDER MELAMID

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

000 ARID ZONE RESEARCH. "Reviews of Research on Arid Zone Hydrology" (Paris, 1953) is the first fruit of UNESCO's Arid Zone Programme, which had its beginning in 1948. For study purposes the arid lands of the world were divided into eight regions—

Trucial Oman MK4
Oman MK1

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ARABIA

THE TRUCIAL COAST

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The shore extending eastward from Qatar to the entrance to the Gulf consists of the shaikhdoms of Abu Dhabi, Dibay, Sharja, Kalba, Ras al-Khaima, Umm al-Quwain, and Ajman. Most possess shallow anchorages on an inlet; inland, they have few interests apart from access to wells, and their frontiers with Saudi Arabia are undemarcated.

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The interest they present from an international point of view lies largely in the success or failure in prospecting for oil. Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd, which is, like its companion in Qatar, an affiliate of IPC has drilled test wells in both Abu Dhabi and Dibay, so far without success. The Shaikhdom of Abu Dhabi has, however, come into prominence on two other counts. First, its dealings with the company were in 1951 the subject of the noted arbitration case in which the Shaikh claimed the right to grant a concession to the Superior Oil Company under the sea-bed off his coasts. PDL lost their claim that their concession extended beyond his territorial waters. Exploration rights in marine areas have been granted to Anglo-Iranian off Abu Dhabi and to Anglo-Iranian in association with the Compagnie Française des Pétroles off Dibay.

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In 1952-3, pressure was exercised on the Shaikh from another quarter, Saudi Arabia. The oasis of Buraimi, which consists of eight villages and lies on the undelimited confines of Abu Dhabi and the Sultanate of Muscat, was partly occupied by a servant of the Saudi Arabian Government on grounds, contested by both the lesser rulers concerned, that the family had owned it in the nineteenth century and claimed title to its ancestral domain. It is likely that belief in the oil-bearing possibilities of these deserts precipitated this sudden claim. The Shaikh of Abu Dhabi and the Sultan of Muscat both sought and obtained some British diplomatic help in upholding their title to the oasis. The incident was important chiefly because it showed how unwise it is not to delimit such frontiers before they assume economic importance through the discovery of mineral wealth.

MUSCAT AND OMAN

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The area of this independent Sultanate¹ is estimated at about 82,000 square miles. It lies at the extreme south-east of the Arabian peninsula, and has a sea coast of some 1,000 miles facing south-east and east and extending from the frontier of the Sultanate of Qishn and Socotra (Eastern Aden Protectorate)

¹ Its status was affirmed by the Hague Court in the Muscat Dhows Case in 1903.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF ARABIA

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November 3, 1914, promised their support to the Sheikh if he at-^K
tacked certain neighboring districts then under Turkish control;⁶⁴⁸
further, they guaranteed the possession of some real estate;⁴⁷¹
owned by him personally and recognized Kuwait as "an inde-
pendent government under British protection."

Oil rights in Kuwait, as in Bahrein, were originally acquired by a British negotiator, Major Holmes, who then attempted to transfer the concession to the Gulf Oil Company. Again difficulties developed because of the opposition of the British Government. The situation was further complicated in this case by the sudden interest shown by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, in which the British Government owns a majority of stock. The U. S. Department of State again intervened in favor of equal treatment for the American company. In this case a compromise was reached between British and American interests, and the Kuwait Oil Company, owned in equal parts by the Gulf Oil Company and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, was established for the exploitation of the Kuwait concession.

Trucial Oman. From the base of the Qatar Peninsula to the Gulf of Oman, with the exception of the tip of the Musandam Peninsula which is part of Muscat, the Arabian shore of the Persian Gulf is ruled by several independent sheikhs who have entered into treaty relations with the British dating back to 1820, when a treaty of peace was concluded between them and the East India Company. The treaty was followed by various agreements dealing primarily with the suppression of piracy and slave trade, as was the case with Bahrein. A general perpetual peace treaty providing also for peace between the various sheikhs was concluded in 1853. In March 1892 the sheikhs signed a so-called exclusive agreement, its text being identical with that of the Bahrein agreement of March 13 of the same year. The Trucial sheikhs were thus brought into a relationship with Great Britain which is comparable to that of Bahrein and Kuwait. The British representative in the area is the Political Officer, Trucial Coast.

Here, too, assurances were given by the local rulers that pearling and oil concessions would be given only with British approval. An oil concession is held by Petroleum Concessions, Ltd., a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company.

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Qatar MK3

KUWAIT MJI

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648 of the Central Powers. In return for this loyalty, the British in a note of 3 November 1914 promised their support to the Sheikh if he attacked certain neighboring districts then under Turkish control; further, it guaranteed the possession of some real estate owned by him personally and recognized Kuwait as "an independent government under British protection."

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648 c. Trucial Oman, From Khor Kalbah to Khor al-'Udayd, the western shore of the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, with the exception of the tip of the Musandam peninsula which is part of Musoat, is ruled by several independent sheikhs. These rulers have entered into treaty relations with the British Government. These relations date back to 1820, when a treaty of peace was concluded **between** these sheikhs and the East India Company. It was followed by various agreements dealing primarily with the suppression of piracy and slave trade. (22) A general perpetual peace treaty providing also for

22. The treaties concerning the Trucial Oman are collected in Aitchison, pp. 239-57. The Trucial Sheikhs include the Sheikhs of Shargah, Ras-al-Khaima, Debai, Abu Dhabi, Umm-al-Qaiwain, Ajman and, since 1936, also the Sheikh of Kalba.

peace between the various Sheikhs was concluded in 1853. In March 1853 the sheikhs signed a so-called exclusive agreement. Its text is identical with that of the Bahrein agreement of March of the same year. The Trucial Sheikhs were thus brought into a relationship with Great Britain which is parallel to that of Bahrein and Kuwait. The British representative in the area is the Political Officer, Trucial Coast, who is assisted by the British Residency Agent on the Trucial Coast.

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471 Here, too, assurances were given by the local rulers that pearling and oil concessions would be given only with British approval. An oil concession is held by Petroleum Concessions, a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company.

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648 d. Qatar. An agreement with the Sheikh of Qatar was concluded by the British on 3 November 1916. (23) In it the Sheikh

244 and various vegetables are cultivated in the inland valleys. Cows, goats and other livestock are raised in the towns and the villages, but camels, goats and sheep are the mainstay of the Bedouin.

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316 Ocher is mined on the offshore island of Bu Musa, but no other mineral deposits of commercial value are known to exist. The Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd., a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company, holds concessions for the exploitation of the oil reserves of Trucial Oman, and is conducting exploratory operations in the area. The discovery of oil would undoubtedly have a revolutionary effect upon the economy and the standards of living of the people.

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361 A large majority of the inhabitants dwell in the headquarters towns of the different sheikhdoms or in adjacent fishing or agricultural villages. Most of the towns are compact, with narrow, crooked streets, darkened by projecting balconies and matting canopies put up for protection from the sun. Dibai, the largest, is a walled town with an estimated population of over 20,000. Sharja, the second in size, is a settlement of 3,000 to 15,000 which is unwallled but surrounded by a fringe of palm thatch, or *barasti*, huts.

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The homes of the wealthy merchants are of two stories with wide balconies and spacious inner courts, but those of the poor are usually simple one- or two-room huts of mud brick or palm thatch. The Bedouin live in the traditional black goat's hair tents of the nomadic tribes. They move about with their herds, following fresh pastures in the winter and congregating around desert wells in the summer. A few join the fishing or the pearling fleets during the summer season, while their families camp in the vicinity of the towns.

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144 The nutritional habits of the people vary with the racial, the social and the economic backgrounds of the diverse communities. Poverty and lack of adequate transportation facilities restrict the foodstuffs available to a large percentage of the population.

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262 Dates, breads prepared from wheat or mil-